

need. It does not distinguish or discriminate. It says simply said what school district actually needs.

If our proposal goes into effect in this omnibus bill, the State would allocate bond authority to school district A. When this community passes a bond initiative, which mine is doing right now, it would then enter into an agreement with the financial company to sell the bonds to bond holders in order to raise funds to build schools in the community. We voted on this.

The school district would use these funds to plan, design, and build additional schools, whatever district we are in. The community would repay the principal on the bonds to the bond holders, but it would not have to pay the interest on the school modernization bonds, an enormous savings for the taxpayers, taxpayer relief.

The bond holders would receive a tax credit equivalent to the amount of interest it would ordinarily have received on the loan. I do not know about my colleagues, but everyone that I speak to this about in my district views this as a positive collaboration, not a take-over of the school districts.

We are not here to suggest that whether it is the Department of Education or whether it is this Congress that we take over the local initiative, but we collaborate.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we know full well what we need to do. We need to vote for a proposal that supports the hundred thousand teachers in the classroom to bring down class size. Mr. Speaker, we frankly need to support the program by the President on school modernization.

DO NOT FORGET AGRICULTURE OR OIL BEFORE WE GO HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, last night, I rose on a similar occasion to plead that, before we go home at this late hour, that we not forget our agricultural sector in this country, that we have many problems due to disease, due to weather, and most importantly due to the low price that we face in all commodities in the agriculture sector.

I am glad to learn, throughout the day, as we tried to negotiate agreements, not only with the Senate but also with the White House, that progress seems to be being made in the issue that we care about when it comes to preserving our family farms and protecting our farmers and ranchers across America.

Clearly we have lots of problems when we see the price of wheat, cattle, and corn, what they are today, what they have been in the past, and recognize that this Congress should not adjourn. The final gavel should not hit the table before we make certain that those issues are addressed.

Again, I ask just briefly tonight that our conferees and our negotiators with the White House continue to pursue tax assistance, reductions in taxes as they affect the family farmer, disaster relief due to the problems we face in price as well as natural disaster; that we clearly do something about the issues of embargoes and sanctions placed against many countries around the world.

Our inability to export agricultural products around the world has a dramatic impact upon the income of the farmers and ranchers across this country. This House has passed relief as regard to sanctions and embargoes, and I hope that the Senate and certainly our negotiators will insist that those provisions remain in the version of the final omnibus bill that I hope we pass before we go home.

Clearly, the farmers of Kansas, the ranchers of Kansas understand that trade is important, that exports matter, and our inability to export to all countries at a time when we have told agriculture to go out and farm the markets is an important factor in their ability to succeed in doing that.

Tonight, having really addressed the issue of agriculture last night and to again plead that it not be forgotten in these last hours, I also wish to point out the difficulties we face in the domestic oil industry.

We have significant production of oil in this country and particularly in my home district in Kansas. Forty million barrels annually is produced in our State, representing about 15,000 jobs, very important jobs to the economy.

Again, when agricultural prices are what they are, usually something is good in Kansas. But wheat, cattle, and corn are all low. On top of that, the price of oil is the same. It is low, and there is little hope for the future.

As that happens in Kansas, our small producers, those wells that produce less than 10 barrels a day, are being shut down and abandoned. When we lose them, we lose our ability to have production in the future. We became more reliant upon foreign sources of oil.

So, again, as I asked last night with regards to agriculture, I ask that our negotiators continue to pursue relief for a beleaguered oil and gas industry in this country, particularly for the small producer and for those producers that produce marginal wells whose costs of production are very high to maintain.

I said on the House floor not too many months ago that it is disturbing when we learn how much money we spend trying to protect foreign supplies of oil but virtually nothing to protect a domestic oil and gas industry, a fact that we will pay a huge price for, I am afraid, someday.

So tonight let me remind our negotiators that we have a marginal tax well credit that matters, that it would allow a tax credit for our producers who have lost money year after year to

go back and receive a tax credit for the years in which they actually had an income.

Several months ago, we were successful in defeating the effort by the Department of Energy on a crazy idea to actually sell oil out of the strategic petroleum reserve at a time when prices were so low we bought oil at a high price and we were willing to sell it at a low price and dump more oil on the domestic market.

Tonight I hope we do not forget about the provision that is included in the Senate bill that allows for the purchase of oil at a low price for the strategic petroleum reserve which can be a security matter for us as well as a benefit to the very depressed domestic oil and gas industry.

This matters to the communities and to the families across Kansas and across the country. It is important that we do not forget what the domestic oil and gas industry represents. Again, before we adjourn and go home to our constituents, something I desperately want to do is to return to Kansas and to my family, but let us make sure that the oil and gas industry as well as agriculture is not forgotten.

MENTAL ILLNESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to bring recognition to the important topic of mental illness. In fact, during this month of October, our Nation is disposed to do our best to raise awareness about the tragic lack of proper care for those among us who are suffering daily from the most severe mental illnesses.

More than 5 million of our fellow citizens suffer from these debilitating, severe mental illnesses. Unfortunately, far too many people are not receiving the proper diagnosis, treatment, or strong community care they need to lead quality and stable lives in our country.

The current practice of psychiatric care in our country has spawned growing homelessness, neglect, as well as violence since deinstitutionalization of patients occurred over two decades ago with no community follow-up.

I am working with several women members, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA), the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) of California, such a leader in this effort, who is here with us this evening, and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON).

All of us are trying very hard to establish a House working group on serious mental illness. This House working group would be responsible for examining the State of our mental health system, especially those who are not being adequately treated with resulting neglect and even violence.

We had an example of that here in our own Capitol with the tragic slaying of two of our officers, Gibson and Chestnut, less than 2 months ago.

This group would hold hearings and gather testimony about what America can do. This week, we are also introducing a sense of Congress resolution regarding the seriousness of mental illness and the need for Congress to establish this working group.

We intend to reintroduce this resolution in the next Congress and ask the Women's Caucus of this House to help us spearhead our efforts.

I urge all Members to support the establishment of this House working group on mental illness as well as our sense of Congress resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS), our very capable and caring colleague.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), for yielding to me.

As she mentioned, just 2 months ago, this Nation and this Congress were stunned by the tragic shootings of Officers Chestnut and Gibson. We still grieve their deaths today.

Out of that tragedy, an opportunity has presented itself to us to finally acknowledge the sad realities of mental illness, which for so long have been swept under the national rug.

Health professionals agree that chronic conditions such as schizophrenia are best addressed through community-based treatment. Such programs provide outreach to people who are in danger of falling through the cracks of our mental health system.

Last week, I was able to attend a briefing by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and I heard about a program of asserting community treatment called PACT.

PACT involves individualized services, psychiatric, social, nursing, and vocation rehabilitation. It has been tremendously successful for those who have not responded to traditional methods of treatment. But only six States offer PACT statewide. This is simply not enough. These are wonderful, proven programs just waiting to be replicated.

It is time for our whole country to face the challenges of mental illness, including treatment, housing, and employment. We must educate ourselves and take the steps to respond. Out of tragedy can come hope. I am pleased to be working with my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) and others to bring this to our attention and to work on it.

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Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) for taking time to join us this evening and also to say if we could put some of the partisanship aside, and we intend to do that in this working group, we can do so much for America.

It seems to me that too much effort is wasted here in Washington in trying to find out why we are different from one another rather than what we can do to work together on important issues like this that affect millions and millions and millions of our fellow citizens.

I would also note that the energy for this comes largely from the women in this body. It would be so easy for the leadership of this institution to make this happen with merely a snap of the fingers and yet it has not. That says a lot about this institution, but it also says a lot about the women here who on a bipartisan basis are trying to do what is right for this country.

We know that with persistence and with goodwill and with bipartisanship, we can achieve real, lasting changes for the better for people in our country who suffer every day under these extremely difficult diseases; their families, their communities. We know, we understand what needs to be done.

I also want to acknowledge the leadership in past years, First Lady Rosalyn Carter who came to this Congress and testified when it was not so popular to do so over 20 years ago, and also Tipper Gore, the wife of the vice president, who has also been supportive of our efforts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TIAHRT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

THE DO-NOTHING LIBERAL CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to associate myself with the remarks of my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) earlier about the crisis that we are facing in agriculture. It would certainly be my hope as well that as we conclude the waning days of this Congressional session that we will be able to fashion a disaster relief package that will bring some much needed relief and immediate assistance to those who are trying to make a living by producing food and fiber in this country.

I would certainly hope that we can reach an agreement on that, on a number of issues that are still outstanding. Before we go home, we have to act, we have to act now.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to answer this evening some of the accusations, the partisan accusations that have been filling this chamber from our friends on the other side. There is the accusation that somehow since we have not moved their liberal agenda, that we are a do-nothing Congress. I suppose by their definition, that is true.

We have not raised taxes. I know that drives them crazy. We have not created new programs or built new Federal bureaucracies here in Washington. In other words, we have not done anything liberal. We are a do-nothing liberal Congress.

Now, that probably should not come as any surprise to the American people who elected a conservative Congress because they have grown weary of having their pockets picked for a liberal agenda that flatly was not working.

The American people need to ignore a lot of the partisan rhetoric that is filling this chamber and coming from our friends on the left. It is more smoke, it is more mirrors, and it is an effort on their part to distract attention from the significant and historic accomplishments of this 105th Congress.

I would like to just note a couple of those, if I might, this evening. The first is the balanced budget agreement. For the first time since 1969, for the first time since I was 8 years old, we actually are operating this Federal Government in the black. I think that is a historic accomplishment. We did it at the same time that we lowered taxes on working families, on farmers and ranchers and small businesses in this country for the first time since 1981.

We made reforms that saved Medicare for another generation, reformed the IRS to make it more user friendly and responsive to the taxpayers of this country.

Let us talk about the surplus. In 1994 it was projected, as far as the eye could see, \$3 trillion in deficits way out into the future. Just last July, the Congressional Budget Office revised that estimate. It is now projecting a \$1.6 trillion surplus for the next 10 years.

How did that happen? Well, maybe part of it is because there are 3.3 million more Americans working today as a result of welfare reform. That was something that our liberal friends did not want to see happen.

Maybe it is really hard for them to acknowledge that when we cut taxes last year, it is actually generating more revenue for the government. We are seeing more realizations. People actually are paying more in taxes as a result of having cut taxes last year, and it has gotten us to a point where we have to make a decision about how to use a \$1.6 trillion surplus.

There are a lot of us on our side who want to make sure that that money